



The Use and Abuse of Diversity: Anthropological Responses to the Threat of Disintegration

The year of 2019 will be an important time as it coincides with the political year, when Indonesia organizes general elections and the local and national parliament (DPR/DPRD) members. A year before the election, the socio-political atmosphere in Indonesia is marked with conversations on national ideology, a heated discussion of development and its outcomes, socioeconomic inequalities, and other political debates that are feared to bring Indonesia to a disintegration.

Since it will be the 7th event, the symposium will also be used as a momentum for reflection by the community of anthropology to test and provide concepts and theories as a contribution to the issue of national disintegration. Indonesia provides a comprehensive case of a nation's journey. Coming from an imagined community with different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, unity becomes an important concept for this nation. In the course of history, the emphasis on unity has once made the state trapped in singular, centralized, and denial to diversity. During the sixth symposium, we have discussed how changes brought by *reformasi* have enable Indonesia to experience series of experiments to live in diversity. The expressions of various ethnic, religious, ideological, and religious symbols such as finding time to rise

The public discussion on the differences and tolerance of the differences takes place every day, both at the political or in the community elite level. We, for example, see how the expression of difference surfaces in the debate over a particular ethnic group. Local variants appear to be a new cultural identity that encourages the strengthening of different ethnic subgroups. Exploration in sexual expression has led us to the emergence of various groups with sexual orientation and preferences that are not just simply masculine and feminine. Similarly, in religious expression; some events show how religious life, keeping purity of religion, and obedience to full practice of religion have brought each group into exclusivity, even in the same religion. The availability of media and Internet network support has made the exposure of the expression of difference in the public sphere to be high; on the other hand, the media is not only an instrument but an active entity manipulating various issues for a particular interest.

The attempt to express the difference, and on the other hand, considers the difference as a necessity, at some point has resulted in the group's exclusivism to thicken and in turn implicate the disintegration of the nation. Some parties intentionally use the diversity as their strategic way to campaign and promote their different interests, while at the same time, neglect the right of others to stay different. Some expressions on the basis of religious, sexual preferences, ideological difference, and ethnicity have led to heaten up social and political life in current Indonesia. This time the Symposium will be specifically a proposal, discussion, and debate about the contribution of anthropology in analyzing and offering solutions to the problem of disintegration of the nation. Anthropologists, or other experts with ethnographic approaches and interests, will meet and discuss the use and abuse of diversity in the academic, social institution, media, and advocacy fields.